Zwaanendael Museum Seeks Volunteers for "Recapturing Black Beaches," an Oral History Initiative

(DOVER, Del. — Jan. 14, 2022) — The Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs' [Zwaanendael Museum](), located at 102 Kings Highway in Lewes, Delaware, is seeking volunteers to participate in "Recapturing Black Beaches: A Shared Story Project," an oral history initiative designed to gather, memorialize and share stories about historically segregated Black and Indigenous beaches in Delaware and the people who visited them. These stories will be used for educational purposes and use will be determined by permissions granted by participants.

Bathing at Rehoboth, Del. — stamp: 1c Benjamin Franklin, Caley Postcard Collection, Courtesy of Delaware Public Archives

Volunteers may participate as storytellers, sharing their memories about the beaches with oral history project staff, or as interviewers, recording conversations between themselves and someone that they know and care about.

To participate in the project, volunteers should fill out an online form or download a printable version that can be submitted via email or mail. Both forms can be found at the following address on the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs website: [https://history.delaware.gov/2021/12/10/recapturing-the-storie]()

s-of-black-beaches/. Printed forms should be mailed to the Zwaanendael Museum, 102 Kings Highway, Lewes, DE 19958 or sent via email to Zmuseum@delaware.gov.

For questions or to learn more, contact the Zwaanendael Museum at (302) 645-1148 or Zmuseum@delaware.gov.

The Zwaanendael Museum was built in 1931 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the state's first European colony, Swanendael, established by the Dutch along Hoorn Kill (present-day Lewes-Rehoboth Canal) in 1631. Designed by E. William Martin (architect of Legislative Hall and the Hall of Records in Dover), the museum is modeled after the town hall in Hoorn, the Netherlands, and features a stepped facade gable with carved stonework and decorated shutters. The museum's exhibits and presentations provide a showcase for Lewes-area maritime, military and social history.

Zwaanendael Museum.
Photo by Cindy Dolan

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The [Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs](#) is an agency of the State of Delaware. The division enhances Delaware's quality of life by preserving the state's unique historical heritage, fostering community stability and economic vitality

and providing educational programs and assistance to the general public on Delaware history. The division's diverse array of services includes operation of five museums which are [accredited by the American Alliance of Museums](), administration of the State Historic Preservation Office, conservation of the state's archaeological and historic-objects collections, operation of a conference center and management of historic properties across the state. Primary funding for division programs and services is provided by annual appropriations from the Delaware General Assembly and grants from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, a federal agency. However, the contents and opinions expressed in the division's programs and services do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Department of the Interior.

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